

INFORMATION REPORT

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1. Trade union organizations in The Netherlands may be clearly divided into Communist and non-Communist movements. The trade union organizations not under Communist influence comprise, all told, approximately one million members. The largest part of these is organized in the cooperative Uniebonden (Association of Unions) with approximately 850,000 members, sub-divided as follows:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|
| (1) NVV (Democratic Socialists)** | 395,000 members |
| (2) KAB (Roman Catholic) | 305,000 members |
| (3) CNV (Protestant Christian) | 160,000 members |

a. A smaller union which is politically independent and anti-Communist, the IVB, has a total of approximately 20,000 members. In addition, there are about 150,000 persons organized in small independent unions which are not affiliated with any of the unions mentioned above. Primarily, these are government personnel connected with non-political social organizations.

b. Opposed to the above-mentioned non-Communist trade union organizations are two trade unions, the larger of which is the EVC (Stalinist Communist). The smaller is the OVB (leftist-Trotskyist) which is under extremely leftist leadership and contains a large number of Communist-oriented members.

c. The OVB, which has just less than 5,000 members, was founded in 1948 by dissident members of the EVC who, for the most part, objected to the growing influence of the CPC in this trade union. Official figures on the number of members of the EVC are given as 160,000. Unofficial claims from various EVC sources range from 130,000 to 170,000 members. Source estimates there are currently approximately 75,000 members. The high claims of the EVC are due to the fact that this union seldom removes a name from its membership lists. The names of deceased members and of former members who have since resigned are usually kept on the union roster and counted as active members, thus overstating the actual strength of the union.

d. Leaving aside the OVB for the moment because of its special nature and small size, the Communists have no seat in the executive organs of the

** See pages 6 and 7 for an explanation of the abbreviations used in this report.

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non Communist trade union organizations whereas from the lowest to the highest echelons in the EVC it is clear that this union is directed by Communists. Since in the EVC the Communists have their own trade union, it is unnecessary for them to penetrate other existing unions. Although the EVC and the CPN have made efforts to penetrate the existing unions, the Uniebonden are fully aware of the Communist nature of the EVC and are constantly on their guard to prevent Communists and certain ex-EVC members from joining their unions. They request Dutch Government authorities to check the political reliability of prospective members.

2. The actual influence in the Netherlands trade unions movement exercised by the EVC is disproportionate to its numerical strength. This is partly due to the fact that its militant mottoes and catch words frequently attract members of the non-Communist organizations and partly to the fact that a large number of unorganized workers appear to be receptive to EVC propaganda on action campaigns in various industries. The disproportionate strength of the EVC in the Netherlands trade union movement despite its relatively small membership is primarily due to the following factors:
 - a. The EVC is an important and controllable tool in the strategy of the WFTU.
 - b. The EVC "Solidarity Fund", although never adequate for the purposes intended for it, attempts to support all strikers during a strike who do not have any outside support. This includes members of non-Communist unions and strikers who are not yet organized in unions.
 - c. The EVC has developed a fairly successful system of capitalizing on the labor gains of other unions. For instance, when it learns that the Uniebonden are about to come to an agreement with a given industry or with the National Mediation Board, it calls a strike just prior to the announcement of the agreement. When the announcement is made, the EVC steps in and claims that the gains made on behalf of labor were only obtained through the forceful action of the EVC. This system not only wins considerable labor support for the EVC from laborers who believe this line of propaganda but it saves the EVC "Solidarity Fund" from the necessity of financing long and costly strikes which it could not afford to support.
 - d. EVC propaganda and such actions as those described in "2" and "3" above are not without success in persuading certain groups of labor that the EVC is the only trade union which is consistently willing to fight for the rights of the lowliest laborer.
3. Concerning the influence of the EVC in the various branches of industry throughout the country, the following may be noted: More than half of its members belong to the Amsterdam division. In the municipal government services, on the harbor front, the metal industries and among the construction workers in the city, the EVC has a dominant position as compared with that of all other trade unions together. Outside Amsterdam the influence of the EVC in organizing and agitating is much less. Note the EVC industrial trade unions in the various sectors of the country listed below:

ABEM	Only moderate influence in the Zaan region.
ABT	Very active section only in Rotterdam. Still capable of strong propaganda and agitation work.
ABTI	Of no importance.
AEWB	A few centers, for instance Rotterdam, The Hague, Enschede. However, shows little initiative. Slight initiative (now on the decrease) shown in the various work campaigns of the DWA (Public Works Service) through the country.
ANEB	Very slight importance. Some organizational activity in The Hague among Indonesians.

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ANBT Very limited influence - is now almost without any importance because of internal squabbles and dissension.

ANBZ Active section only in Amsterdam and Rotterdam. Influence among fishermen decreasing.

ATEK Of importance only in the textile region of Twente. Gradually becoming less important.

BHBY No importance.

BLZ Some influence in the farming regions in Friesland and Groningen. Is handicapped by fact it is not recognized by the Government.

BIOP This union has sections in only a few large cities. Except for Amsterdam, these sections are of little importance. It should be noted here that Government personnel organized in this union are all of a very low category, comprising only street-cleaners, street-car conductors, garbage cleaners, harbor workers in municipal harbors, etc.

BPSLI No importance.

Chevofa Decreasing importance. Still some influence in the Zaan region and in a few larger industries.

Grafische Little influence. Handicapped by fact it is not recognized by the Government.

Metaal The most important EVC union in and outside Amsterdam. This union is well represented in various large industries. Although Metaal occupies a minority position in the metal industry, it has a strong influence on it.

Spoor Very little influence, partly because of the fact that it is not recognized by the management of the Netherlands State Railways.

4. However, as may appear from the above, the position of the EVC in The Netherlands cannot be compared with that, for instance, of the CGT in France or the CGIL in Italy. Despite this fact, its importance as a trade union organization is far greater than that of the CPN itself as a political party. Officially the CPN maintains no direct contact with the Cominform. The extent of the CPN's influence in comparison with that of sister Communist parties in Western Europe is rather slight. On the other hand, the EVC, being affiliated with the WFTU, maintains direct contact with the top leaders of this international Communist organization. In short, compared with the relatively limited power position of the CPN in the Communist political ranks of Western Europe, the EVC occupies a more dominant place in the ranks of the international Stalinist trade union movement. This fact is partly due to the schism and separation which took place in the beginning of 1949 in the WFTU. When the non-Communist trade unions resigned from the WFTU, the EVC became the most important base of the WFTU in the Scandinavian countries, the UK, The Netherlands and Belgium. This displacement in influence was clearly indicated by the election of the national chairman of the EVC, Berend Bloksil, as one of the vice-chairmen of the WFTU.

5. The Netherlands Government has thus far refused to recognize and to grant royal approval to the EVC and the trade unions affiliated with it. Consequently, it is not represented in a single government committee concerned with industrial life. Only in a few communities, for instance Amsterdam, is the EVC accepted in the local "Organized Discussion Committees".

a. The following may be stated concerning the influence of the EVC in the political and social-economic field:

(1) Political:

a. Participation in Foreign International Actions:

i. Intensive support of the Communist peace movement.

ii. Continuous protest actions (primarily written ones) against the actions of the United Nations, against the policies of the USA, against Western Union, and against intervention in the Korean war.

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- iii. Opposition to the foreign policy of the Netherlands Government, primarily because of the points mentioned under (ii) above.

- b. Internal Actions:

- i. Intensive struggle against adoption of the law for the P.B.O and the O.R.

- ii. Constant opposition to the general policy of the government.

- (2) Social-Economic:

- a. International actions:

- i. Sharp attacks on the Marshall Plan.

- ii. Violent agitation against the Schuman Plan.

- b. Internal Actions:

- i. Continuous attempts to create an atmosphere of dissatisfaction among the working populace.

- ii. The instigation of strikes wherever possible.

- iii. Protests against "war production" in the various industries.

- iv. Taking organizational measures in preparation for the establishment of unemployment committees in an effort to carry out the directives issued by the WFTU on this subject.

- v. Agitation against increases in rents and any other Government measures considered to be unfavorable to the interests of the working class.

6. As the connection between the WFTU and the EVC becomes closer, this world organization is growing more important, via the EVC, for broad layers of the Dutch workers. This situation may be primarily ascribed to the setting up of the various international trade departments of the WFTU, to which the various trade unions of the EVC are affiliated. As a consequence of this, the WFTU is now in closer direct contact with the trade unions and with labor here in the Netherlands than previously, a more favorable position to increase its influence in the country. At all congresses of the WFTU, as well as most of the congresses of the international trade departments, the EVC or one of its affiliated trade unions has been represented. The decisions taken at these conferences were for the most part reproduced in extenso in the press of the EVC trade unions. In addition, these unions make every effort to carry out these resolutions insofar as they may be applied to Dutch conditions. As yet no headquarters for one of the trade departments of the WFTU has been established in The Netherlands.

7. In early 1948 the leaders of the Rotterdam section of the EVC, together with the majority of its members, separated from the EVC in protest against the constantly increasing Stalinist communist influence in the EVC. They formed the OVB. Since the founding of the OVB, there has been little or no organized opposition within the ranks of the EVC. After this date the resignation of members from the EVC was for the most part a matter of individual or incidental character. However, if a prominent and influential member of the executive committee was involved, his example was often followed by a number of other members. The most serious opposition after 1948 which led to a schism in the EVC took place in the ANBZ, the Seamen's Union of the EVC. The majority of the fishermen affiliated with this union broke all connections with the EVC. This group, known as the Koning group, joined the OVB.

8. An increase in the strength of Communism in The Netherlands might well be caused by the presence of the following factors:

- a. The undeniable gap between wages and prices, despite the fact that the discrepancy caused by this may be temporarily eased because of the recent rise in wages. However, the official trade unions, the Uniebonden, are now urging price control as the only way to bridge the gap between wages and prices.

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- b. Fear of increasing unemployment.
 - c. The cooperative Uniebonden still do not have complete control over their members. As bona fide organizations bound to consult with the Government and employers, and obligated to honor legal agreements entered into as results of consultation with Government, they are closely connected with the policies of the Government. The EVC, on the other hand, carries on a radical and unhindered opposition.
 - d. The devaluation of September 1949, the results of which are still making themselves felt.
 - e. Price rises unfavorably reflected in a general, increasing fear of a third world war and a disquieting rise in world market prices.
 - f. A definite impasse in the further planning and implementation of certain important phases of the Benelux union contributing to a growing fear of additional price rises. Broad layers of the working population are accordingly more open to political extremist agitation on this subject.
 - g. Employers can now exert less direct influence than before the war on the continuance of labor peace. At the moment they are profiting from a generally rather favorable situation, and hence they are definitely interested in maintaining peace as much as possible in the industrial life of the country, partly by granting premiums of various kinds. However, they are bound to follow the strict directives issued by the Government in consultation with the National Mediation Board.
 - h. The increase in the nation's rearmament and war production has resulted in the Communists protesting vigorously while pointing out the probable social-economic worsening of the workers' status. Such deterioration in the standard of living would bring with it new tensions. However this may be, the increase of the nation's defense potential will, in the long run, receive the approval of the great majority of the Dutch working class population for ideological reasons.
9. The Uniebonden and the Communist EVC all have at their disposal some competent leaders. However, with the exception of Berend Blokzijl, Communist Chairman of the EVC, the leading figures of the EVC have been subject to frequent CPN and foreign Communist criticism for their lack of militancy and their unimaginative and ineffective leadership. The Uniebonden always cooperate closely with the Government, contrary to the EVC which does not. Despite the small number of its members, the last-mentioned organization, taking full advantage of certain favorable circumstances for its purposes, has succeeded in bringing about numerous small as well as some large-scale strike actions. The power and influence of the WFTU definitely influence the national unions affiliated with it. Since the split in the WFTU which occurred in early 1949 took place too recently and since the world socialist trade organization which was subsequently founded, the ICFTU, has in practice attracted too little attention to give any real indication of its power and authority, it is still too early to determine whether the latter will be able to make any appreciable inroads on the WFTU. Many politically leftist workers still follow with interest the actions of the WFTU. The fact that the EVC stands out in The Netherlands as the national exponent of this Communist world organization increases its influence and authority over part of the Dutch working class. The national chairman of the EVC, Berend Blokzijl, must be considered a trade union leader of dynamic status whose influence as an agitator must not be underestimated. His election in June 1949 as one of the vice chairmen of the WFTU has increased his personal influence still further.

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EXPLANATION OF ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS REPORT FOR THENALES OF THE UNIONS AFFILIATED WITH THE EVC

ABHM	ALGEMEENE BOND VAN WERKERS IN DE HOUT EN MEUBILERINGS INDUSTRIE	General Union of Wood and Furniture Industry Workers
ABT	ALGEMEENE BEDRIJFSBOND TRANSPORT	General Transport Union
ABTI	ALGEMEENE BOND VAN WERKERS IN DE TABAKSINDUSTRIE	General Union of Workers in the Tobacco Industry
ABWB	ALGEMEENE BOND VAN WERKERS IN DE BOUWNIJVERLEID	General Union of Construction Workers
AHBH	ALGEMEENE NEDERLANDSE BOND VAN HOTELPERSONEEL	General Netherlands Union of Hotel Personnel
ANBT	ALGEMEENE NEDERLANDSE BOND VAN BIOSCOOP - EN THEATER-PERSONEEL	General Netherlands Union of Cinema and Theater Personnel
ANBZ	ALGEMEENE NEDERLANDSE BOND VAN ZEEVARENDEN	General Netherlands Seamen's Union
ATEK	ALGEMEENE BOND VAN WERKERS IN DE TEXTIEL - EN KLEDING-INDUSTRIE	General Union of Workers in the Textile and Clothing Industry
BHEV	ALGEMEENE BOND VAN WERKNEMERS IN HANDEL-, BANK- EN VERZEKERING-SWEZEN	General Union of Employees in Commerce, Bank and Insurance
BLZ	BOND VAN LAND- EN ZUIVERLARBEIDERS	Union of Agriculture and Dairy Workers
BUOP	BOND VAN NEDERLANDS OVERHEIDS-PERSONEEL	Union of Netherlands Government Personnel
BPSHI	ALGEMEENE BOND VAN PERSONEEL IN SOCIAL/HYGIENISCHE INSTELLINGEN	General Union of Personnel in Social/Hygiene Institutions
Chevofa	ALGEMEENE BOND VAN WERKERS IN DE CHEMISCHE-, VOEDINGS- EN FABRIEKMATIGE INDUSTRIE	General Union of Chemical, Food and Manufacturing Industry Workers
Grafische	BOND VAN WERKNEMERS IN GRAFISCHE EN PAPIERVERWERKENDE BEDRIJVEN	Union of Employees in Graphic and Paper Manufacturing Industries
De Metaal	BOND VAN WERKNEMERS IN DE METAAL-NIJVERHEID EN AANVERANTE BEDRIJFSTAKKEN	Union of Employees in the Metal Industries and related Industrial Fields
Spoor	ALGEMEENE BOND VAN SPOOR-, TRAM- EN NEVENBEDRIJVEN PERSONEEL	General Union of Personnel of Railway, Tram and related Industries
VVV	NEDERLANDS VERBOND VAN VAKVERENIGINGEN	Netherlands Trade Union Confederation
KAB	KATHOLIEKE ARBEIDERS BEWEGING	Catholic Workers Movement
CNV	CHRISTELIJKE NATIONAAL VAKVERBOND	Christian National Trade Union
EVC	EENHEIDS VAK CENTRALE	Unity Trade Union Central
OVV	ONAFHANKELIJKE VERBOND VAN BEDRIJFS-ORGANISATIES	Independent Union of Industrial Organizations

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CGT	CONFEDERATION GENERALE DU TRAVAIL	General Confederation of Labor
CGIL	CONFEDERAZIONE GENERALE ITALIANA DI LAVORO	Italian General Confederation of Labor
CPN	COMMUNISTISCHE PARTIJ NEDERLAND	Communist Party of The Netherlands
NVC	NEDERLANDSE VAK CENTRALE	Netherlands Trade Union Central
PBO	PUBLIEKRECHTELIJKE BEDRIJFS- ORGANISATIE	Public Law Aspect of Industrial Planning
OR	ORDERMEMINGS-RADEN	Business (Development) Councils

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